HOW PRIMARY TEACHERS USE MUSIC TO SUPPORT ORAL LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

by

Orlando D. Wiebe

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Glossary

This study will contain terms specific to language and literacy instruction as well as to music and to classroom routines specific to public education in British Columbia. For clarification within the context of this study, I have provided brief definitions for these terms here as well as in the text as I understand and use them. Wherever possible I have provided references.

artifacts

The term *artifacts* is used here to refer to specific instructional pieces used by teachers such as songs, fingerplays, chants, and rhythmic games that may be gathered in this inquiry process.

cadence

Within every language, there is a particular lilt or rhythm that helps to convey meaning. I use the word *cadence* to describe the more predictable rhythmic patterns that are particular to song, chant, and poetry.

chanting

In this study, *chanting* refers to an instructional routine in which students read rhythmically and in unison. Classes often read from a collection of poems or rhymes that have become familiar to them over time. Chants may also be memorized. Chanting routines are as old as nursery rhymes but the instructional strategy was popularized by McCracken and McCracken (1986) when the *whole language* approach to instruction emerged.

choral speech

Many teachers engage students in oral reading by using scripts or texts that are designed for students reading aloud in groups or in turn in a dramatic or presentation style.

craft knowledge

Teachers routinely collaborate to share teaching methods and materials and to develop professional thought through increasingly varying opportunities. In this paper, I refer to this synergy of teaching ideas as *craft knowledge* (Halbert, Kaser, and Koehn, 2011).

engagement

Success in teaching is contingent on and often measured by how involved or *engaged* in their own learning the students appear be.

formal/informal teacher leader

Within each school, teachers are tasked with leadership and administrative responsibilities beyond their normal teaching duties. Aside from principalships and vice-principalships, which are considered formal administrative or leadership roles, formal teacher leadership roles include but are not limited to department head, committee member, and lead teacher where teachers are given special training and support to lead other teachers. Informal teacher leaders are those who are either asked to lead or self-initiate efforts such as professional development or educational change.

Gitksan - Gitksan (also spelled Gitxsan), which means *people of the Skeena,* are Canadian Aboriginal or First Nations people that live along the Skeena River of northwestern

British Columbia in the communities of Hazelton, Kispiox and Glen Vowell (the Eastern Gitksan bands) and Kitwanga, Kitwankool and Kitsegukla (the Western Gitksans) (Powell, Jensen, & Pedersen, 2012).

inservice/ professional development

Teacher inservice is distinguished from professional development by its source. Inservice is initiated and funded solely by the employer, usually for the purposes of curriculum implementation and professional development as understood by the teachers in this province to be the responsibility of the professional.

intermediate

In the local context, intermediate refers to grades four through seven. This definition can vary even within a district where some students begin middle school at grade seven.

music specialist

In order to differentiate between music taught within the classroom by the students' regular teacher and the music instruction delivered by a designated music teacher, I use the term *music specialist* to describe a specially trained music instructor.

prescribed learning outcome

Prescribed Learning Outcomes (PLOs) are specific teaching objectives as set out by the curriculum documents published by the BC Ministry of Education (2006). The documents in which PLOs are found are called *Integrated Resource Packages* or IRPs.

pre-service teacher

A pre-service teacher is an education student at a university or college who is preparing for teacher certification.

primary

In BC, we refer to children who are enrolled in school in kindergarten and in grades one, two, and three as *primary* students. The BC primary program is the set of curricula designated by the provincial Ministry of Education to be taught to these students.

professional inquiry

This is a qualitative research method in which educators engage in systematic exploration of aspects of professional practice that interest them. In this case, my inquiry is focused on gathering craft knowledge from educators working in their field. Professional inquiry may be based on cycles of action and reflection (*action-based*) or it may be *information-based*, as in this study. Professional inquiry generally leads to the improvement of educational practice through information gathering, reflection, and sustainable revision of past practices in light of what has been learned.

professional learning community

is a group of teachers organized for the purpose of sharing and building teaching knowledge and practice through collaborative inquiry (Halbert, Kaser, and Koehn, 2011).

regular classroom

Within my own school's organization as with many kindergarten to grade seven schools in BC, the regular classroom is the one where students spend most of their day and where their core subjects are taught. Specialist teachers may cover particular

subjects such as a second language or music but these teaching arrangements vary from school to school.

whole language

This refers to a philosophy and set of language instruction strategies that teach reading and writing through a natural, global understanding of language and literature rather than a lock-step basal approach which isolates skills and parts of language.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank first of all, the participants in this study. It is the authentic work of practicing teachers who are willing to share their ideas and successes with their colleagues and teacher candidates that ultimately builds the profession. Thank you for your generous gifts of time, thoughtful responses, and resources.

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CHAPTER I

THE OPPORTUNITY:

CLOSING THE ORAL LANGUAGE GAP WITH MUSIC

"To learn to read is to light a fire; every syllable that is spelled out is a spark" (Victor Hugo).

In primary education, teachers acknowledge a marked disparity among the language abilities of children who enter Kindergarten. Children vary in ability from precocious fluency to little or no apparent speech whatsoever. This is a huge disadvantage for some considering the important role played by oral language in the making of meaning and building of literacy skills. According to British Columbia's Ministry of Education guidelines, "The oral language students acquire when they are young helps them connect words, sounds, and meaning with print (2006, p 28)." In my own practice as a primary teacher I have noticed how early speakers are often also early readers and writers. Among the students I teach, there is an apparent learning gap between learners who are language rich and those who struggle with the spoken word at an early age.

The British Columbia K-7 English Language Arts Integrated Resource Package (BC Ministry of Education, 2006) places the central theme of language learning as "making meaning" on the three pillars of reading and viewing, writing and representing, and speaking and listening (p. 16). Spoken language not only allows teachers and students to "convey and derive meaning (p. 8)," it is the bridge to link ideas to print for understanding and communicating. Speaking and listening are the first steps to literacy. This emphasis seems to imply a disadvantage to the reluctant or late speakers.

According to the 2006 IRP document, revisions made to curricula have begun to accommodate students with language gaps by increasing the emphasis on oral language in the primary classroom. If this were enough to effect positive change in the daily practice of teachers we could ignore the promising work of our colleagues. Naturally, we must not. Collaborating to explore and experiment with emerging and successful practices through inquiry, shared experience, and professional learning communities (Halbert, Kaser, and Koehn, 2011) contributes to the greater body of craft knowledge.

Overview of the Study

This is a qualitative professional inquiry (Brown & Cherkowski, 2011) to discover the ways that teachers use music or musical and rhythmic strategies in the form of songs, chants, and poems to develop students' oral language or to meet oral language prescribed learning outcomes (PLOs). The purpose is to investigate, articulate, and share teachers' craft knowledge so that promising practices become more accessible and a greater number of students share the benefits of teaching excellence. In previous literature, many general comments have been made about the benefits of music instruction and many advocacy studies support music education as it is delivered by music specialist teachers. I decided to look specifically at language development in conjunction with music instruction as reported by primary teachers.

My Interest in the Topic

My interest in this topic is based on my own observations, as both a music specialist and a primary teacher, of children's responses to cadence and pattern in language, elements of which are a large part of music. In some way, music and rhythmic pattern have always been a part of my teaching practice in the early grades and in the practice of my colleagues I

have noticed. When teaching times tables or skip counting to grade three students, for example, I integrated reciting the multiples of 2 or 3 or 5 part of the lesson. Surprisingly, I noticed that counting by fives seemed easier for the students than counting by twos or threes. I came to believe that this is because of the natural cadence or rhythmic pattern in the lilting sound of skip counting by fives which makes it easy and fun. The corporate act of reciting a unison sequence also seemed to be rewarding for students.

In other areas of instruction, I used a short *movement and singing time* between lessons to give students a chance for students to become physically active in body and voice. I noticed how this activity appeared to improve the level of energy and engagement among students and how students, even reluctant readers, would become involved with the text of the song written on the poster paper. I saw similar levels of interest when that musical text was the product of a group song writing activity or choral speech; children love to see their own words in print and see this as investing their own school work with meaning and purpose.

Although this is not a focus of my study, I am also curious about the physiological effects of singing. It has many times been reported to me and I know from personal experience that a person often feels better after some rigorous singing or an engaging musical rehearsal. I have witnessed this change in students during singing times leading me to believe that vocalizing in this way provides its own reward. In the case of reluctant speakers, children are more apt to participate and speak aloud in the context of physically engaging music and others reinforce oral language practice.

I am interested in exploring ways that other teachers who excel in this area of pedagogy, perhaps not as music specialists but as confident and experienced primary

teachers, address language development goals through musical activities. I am interested in both sharing my own expertise and accessing the expertise of others to improve my practice of developing children's language through music. As an informal teacher leader, I feel a responsibility to share the findings of my inquiry for the benefit of my colleagues and their students.

Significance

In light of the challenges we face both in terms of the particular needs of students and the changing nature of education, I believe that teachers, particularly those in northwestern BC, need more and varying tools to tackle language instruction in the regular classroom and I am interested to see if music can be this tool. My study also finds particular importance in its response to recent changes in BC Ministry of Education language arts curricula. The Integrated Resource Package for English Language Arts that was provided for teachers in 2006 places a significant emphasis on the teaching of oral language in the primary years. Children must be able to "express themselves critically, creatively, and articulately for a variety of personal, social, and work-related purposes (p. 12)." For grades one, two, and three, alongside the other two Language Arts streams of *reading and viewing* and *writing and representing*, the time allocation for oral language or *speaking and listening* is now set at 40 to 60 percent (p.16). A full half of primary language curricula are to be dedicated to speaking and listening and I would suggest that the more creative and affective forms of oral expression such as chant, poetry, and song could fit into this domain.

Seeing the need for enhanced oral language instruction and the mandate from the BC Ministry of Education, through this project I aim to fill one small knowledge gap in finding the solution for all students and particularly for disadvantaged learners or those most in need

of oral language development. The results of this study could have ramifications for implementation and development and could make a case for the deployment (or as in our case, re-deployment) of a music principal in a district or a music helping teacher like the literacy specialists, or integration support teachers, who, in many districts service district schools to help teachers set up particular programs or lend support or resources to facilitate these programs. I believe that the data gathered in projects like this one can support this case.

Focus Question

I began with one focus question to explore current practices of local primary teachers who see the potential for developing the language abilities of young children through music activities, which lead to a second question that applies the learning gathered from current practice to professional development for other educators. First, *What musical and rhythmic strategies do teachers use most effectively to enhance oral expression and reception?* And second, *Given what we understand about the use of music as a language development tool, how can beginning and veteran teachers more fully exploit the power of this strategy for the benefit of all learners?* These are the basic questions that go to the heart of what I seek to learn from this study.

Personal Location

The project follows a long time interest in the way music can be used not only as instruction, but to support instruction. From 1991 to 1997, I developed and taught a Kindergarten to Grade 7 general music education program in one elementary school. I used singing, rhythmic exercises, movement, percussion instruments, recorder flutes, listening to music, and music games as parts of my program. When I switched to the primary and

intermediate classroom teaching, I slowly began to develop ways in which music became part of my program across the core curriculum.

With grade twos and threes, I used singing, instrument playing, and recorded music for daily physical activity requirements, support for curriculum content, and for cultural and performance learning outcomes as many teachers do. Chant and choral speech were used as one way to encourage reluctant speakers to vocalize and build fluency. Reading text on a poster paper together, for example, helped emerging readers to gain confidence and practice skills. Song-writing activities in group format allowed me to teach and reinforce concepts of language rhythm, rhyme, and pattern. The rewarding nature of seeing one's own words in print in itself was gratifying to students. In this way, children, particularly vulnerable learners could rely on the predictability of language patterns and cadence to improve their own reading ability.

The school where I developed and taught this program and continue to teach today is in a small community in northwestern BC, about an hour and a half drive from the district's central office in the nearest small city. The student body is diverse and varied in ability and background. The home life of our students also varies from environments that are impoverished to those where literacy, education, and learning beyond the scheduled school day are highly supported. Language abilities range among early learners from those who enter kindergarten with very limited speech and no letter or colour recognition to children who are emerging readers and expressive speakers at that age.

An historical note here may also help to clarify context. In 1991 when I began teaching, music education in its many forms was highly supported in this district. Programs of various kinds from elementary through senior high were well funded compared to today

and the district staff included a vice-principal of music whose full responsibility was overseeing and supporting these programs. Elementary students were guaranteed 90 minutes of music with a qualified specialist music teacher. Today, partly as a result of amalgamation of two districts, declining enrollment, and restructuring, those opportunities occur inconsistently throughout our district and the music district vice-principal position no longer exists. In a time of a growing mandate for oral language instruction and a priority to reach struggling learners, the need for strategies such as music continues.

Chapter Summary

The early primary classroom teacher typically enrolls a vastly diverse group of children. Language instruction in general and oral language in particular presents difficulties when there are students with apparent language delays. In my own experience and in the practice of some colleagues, some aspects of music instruction such as songs, chants, movement, and rhythmic activities have helped to support this learning. In my research through semi-structured interviews of several of primary colleagues I have explored the extent which a small sample of local teachers are using these strategies and how the effectiveness that they attribute to their use of these strategies.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

"Music should never be merely comfortable, never fossilized, never soothing. It should startle people and reach deep down inside them, forcing them to reflect" (Rilling, 2013).

The purpose of this review of literature is to first look at current BC Ministry of Education documents for English Language Arts curriculum to show how oral language is defined and what general goals are prescribed for primary students. I then examine the work of researchers and educators in the field of music and music education to find what connections have already been made between the use of music as an education tool and enhanced language performance. I also discuss some specific strategies used to exploit musical tools in this way.

The arguments for the general benefits of music instruction are many and well established. "Music not only promotes the development of musical intelligence as defined by Howard Gardner (1983), but also offers other cognitive benefits, such as helping children acquire vocabulary, symbolic understanding, a sense of sequence, memory, and auditory training" (Warner, 1999). The more specific benefit of music aptitude as it relates to the learning of language in children is the focus of this review.

Curriculum Context

The BC Ministry of Education IRP sets the goal of the Language Arts program to "provide students with opportunities for personal and intellectual growth through speaking, listening, reading, viewing, writing, and representing to make meaning of the world …" (p. 10). In this document, language in its many forms is portrayed as the primary conduit for all

learning (p. 11) and oral language, or more specifically, speaking and listening, is foundational to literacy. The definitions of oral language here go beyond the traditional limitations of presenting reports, for example and value interactions between peers and adults as important builders and indicators of learning. The expectations for students finishing grade three encompass meaning applications such as monitoring and sharing learning as well as the more technical aspects of demonstrating conventional uses of syntax and grammar (p. 14). Time allotment for oral language is suggested between 40 and 60 percent in the primary years.

The authors of the IRP recognized the importance of interactive play for the development of language and other important skills such as turn taking and relationship building (p. 27). Curriculum strategies for oral language recommended in this document tend towards the fostering of one on one discussion, partner talk, and small group interaction. The quality of literacy experiences in general are directly related to student engagement and sense of community (p. 47).

Early Studies

The *Mozart Effect* and the subsequent boom in classical recording sales was based on a study by Rauscher and Shaw (1995), who premised the notion that children's spatial intelligence would be increased, simply by listening to selections of baroque music. Despite evidence to the contrary, this premise has persisted in the beliefs of parents and teachers. Schellenberg's study of 2001 summarily dismissed the Mozart Effect findings when no significant correlation could be found between music listening and increased performance and Rauscher's results could not be satisfactorily reproduced. However, this study did confirm that "relatively long term cognitive side effects result from taking music lessons."

(Schellenberg, 2001, p. 8). While citing the many studies that show improvement occurring coincidentally with music training of one kind or another, Schellenberg highlighted the effects of music study such as increased emotional intelligence, improved fine motor skills, an ability to detect meter, and enhanced understanding of distinctions in sound (p.13).

Much of the academic support for music education has been built on the foundational work in England of Gregory and Lamb (1993), whose study established a correlation between music proficiency and phonemic awareness. The authors designed a special test to determine musical aptitude, specifically, the ability to distinguish changes in musical pitch and tone quality as well as tests to assess reading and phonics skills. The results of their study place an emphasis on pitch awareness as a determining factor in reading performance.

Music and Young Children

Daniel Levitin (2006) provided a strong and detailed description of how music is used not only in education but in general society. He explained in technical terms how certain musical expectations are developed by establishing patterns in a musical piece or series of pieces and then changing them to evoke a certain emotion. These patterns or "schema (p.117)" are based on well-established modes or styles developed over years of repetition. These emotional cues can and have been widely manipulated for advertising, propaganda or any number of purposes.

Levitin's (2006) work relates to language in that he connected music preferences and understandings to physiological roots, even in prenatal experiences (p.227). He cited examples of how infants have been known to recognize even the most subtle changes or patterns in pitch or melody which in turn can be tied to how they identify different speakers, for example, or derive meaning based on vocal inflection and other nuanced aspects of

speech. According to studies of music in infancy, very small children understand and depend on quasi-musical cues to make meaning from vocal sounds (Trehub, 2005).

Music Instruction and Language

A strong link between music instruction and language acquisition, both written and oral, for young children has been established through many studies and quasi-experiments. In his review of the last 20 years of research, Jonathan Bolduc (2008) reviewed 13 particularly pertinent works from different countries that connect music and language in early pedagogy. "It seems that musical activities promote the development of auditory perception, phonological memory, and metacognitive knowledge – three components that are equally involved in the development of linguistic abilities" (p. 1). In particular, what is established through the research is that the children who are astute recognizers of melodic distinctions and differences of tone and pitch are also the ones who have strong phonological awareness more so than the children who showed rhythmic aptitude.

By establishing a correlation between music aptitude and phonological awareness, Anvari, Trainor, Woodside, and Levy (2002) found that "music stimulates phonological memory and promotes linguistic knowledge transfer" among 4 and 5 year olds. Young children who were given basic instruction in singing and rhythm were much better equipped to identify parts of words and sentences and use them successfully based on the patterns observed in language. Rubinson inferred a strong correlation between musical ability in kindergarten children and phonological awareness (2010). This quantitative study concurred with previous findings of correlation between music aptitude in young children and pre-reading and emergent reading skills such as alphabet knowledge.

Gromko (2009) and colleagues set out to find evidence for a "temporal sequencing mechanism," that is, a specific function of the brain related to discerning and memorizing metered patterns that is common to different memory tasks. Using tones, note patterns, nonsense words, and random number sets, they tested groups of primary age children and then organized results into groups based on performance. Their findings suggested that children with strong ability for memorizing tones were also more accurate in remembering language sounds and patterns. They also found that children with strong aural discrimination skills performed with greater accuracy on tests of working memory and recall. Their findings suggest that "teachers can assist children to improve their memory for sound by teaching patterns within music contexts through meaningful exercises, games, and songs" (Gromko, 2009). An earlier work by the same author (Gromko, 2005) drew a strong link between basic music instruction and high performance on phonemic discrimination and phonemic awareness tasks by kindergarten students. The suggestion of the study was that music instruction contributed directly to the acquisition of skills necessary for language development.

Other Music Applications in Language Instruction

Other music educators have used singing and song writing to teach particular skills of language (Smith, 2000). Using a wide repertoire of folk songs, and children's music, teachers manipulate words, sounds, and phrases to reinforce word-sound discrimination and phonemic awareness. Taking a familiar song or rhyme and altering slightly or adding new words allowed students to use the patterns of existing forms to help them learn the patterns and practice by creating new ones within that structure. Smith also demonstrated examples

of using new words with familiar tunes to build instructional content. In this way, "writing" songs is used as a way to enhance learning.

McCracken and McCracken (1986) reported on the successful use of songs and chants as language instruction tools. They wrote that artistic expression in general could be seen as "non-language" or a way of making expressions beyond speech in a kind of quasi-language (p. 3). They employed a particular technique of teaching children to memorize a musical passage, then use the learned text to teach reading and writing (p. 18). In this pedagogy, oral understanding comes before the written word through rhythm, rhyme, and cadence (p. 102).

An action research project by Campabello, De Carlo, O'Neil, and Vacek (2002) demonstrated that the use of music with younger and older children helped with phonological skills and memory and recall. The authors of the study designed "musical interventions" as mnemonic tools to help children remember facts and concepts and noticed dramatic improvements in general learning in the case of students using songs as memory enhancers. The findings of an action research study are limited to students in that particular context, yet hold the suggestion that music strategies may, in some settings, be used successfully to achieve learning goals.

One qualitative study (Whitacre, 1996) exploring the use of music integration as a tool for boosting curriculum content areas with elementary students made a rather discouraging conclusion of the process. This report documented an attempt by one music specialist to gather curriculum vocabulary and learning outcomes from classroom teachers and support these teaching ideas with musical strategies such as content-specific songs. The

result was less than stellar due to the isolation of the music specialist, poor administrative support, and lack of cooperation from classroom teachers.

Support for the integration of the arts generally and music specifically comes from authors Cornett and Smithrim as they draw a direct connection between arts education and learning in the classroom. "Literature, art, drama, dance, and music draw on the common concepts of shape, action, motion, pattern, and rhythm and can be tapped for their power to reveal these same aspects in other curricular areas (p. 34).

Chapter Summary

Although some of the studies showed improvement in learning directly after and seemingly as a result of music instruction, most of the studies that indicated that music aptitude was a strong predictor of language and particularly reading success were not able to establish a causal relationship. The ability to distinguish certain types of vocal sound or quasi-musical sounds is indeed employed by children beginning in infancy and is used to begin building verbal language. Most of the studies reviewed here tried to show that music instruction would aid in the teaching of language skills, or at least that music instruction was strongly correlated with improvements in language abilities. To establish direct causation would indeed be a subject of another study.

Music delivered by music specialists as a curricular teaching tool was seen to have mixed success depending on the extent to which both teachers and students were engaged with the authenticity of the making of meaning through music. In other words, students and teachers who were more involved with the writing of educational music were more engaged than those who were given curriculum content-based music.

What particularly resonates with my project goals was how researchers observed music instruction in the context of interdisciplinary approaches rather than any particular music focus such as note reading or rhythm recognition alone. This shows the value of music instruction beyond the music classroom and into the regular class. These results might imply that teachers who develop a strong understanding of the wider uses of song and chant within language curricula are more apt to use these methods to support language instruction. Having the tools and materials to do this would further the propensity of teachers to apply these methods and to observe and evaluate learning benefits for their students.

Because of the language focus of this project, I have chosen not to comment on authors, practitioners or individual methodologies whose purpose is to teach music for the sake of music. The particular materials I have examined in this review cause me to make a conceptual leap for the purposes of this inquiry. The emphasis of almost all of the work is on the mechanics of written language development such as phonological awareness as it is required in the very early years. I seek to narrow the inquiry focus to music as it relates to oral expression and student engagement in expression.

CHAPTER III

INQUIRY METHOD

"Music expresses that which cannot be put into words and that which cannot remain silent" (Hugo, 1864).

There are four participants that contributed to this study, including me. For the sake of clarity, when I use the word *participants*, I refer to the three teachers that I interviewed and only include myself when I explicitly say so. Each teacher participated in a 30 to 40 minute recorded, semi-structured interview, responding to the questions from a pre-designed Interview Guide (see APPENDIX A) and subsequent questions that arose as a result of the responses. After each session, I used the recording to produce a verbatim transcript of the entire conversation. Dividing the printed transcript into three columns with the questions and responses in the first column, I summarized the participants' ideas into codes such as "classroom management" or "science application" in the second column. In the third column, I was able to extract categories and themes based on the occurrences of each code, which led me to infer commonalities and variances within the body of interview material (Saldana, 2009). In some cases themes are overlapping and some of the same ideas are categorized under different sub-headings.

Benefits of a Small Sample Size

In conducting this kind of qualitative research, I was very much aware of the need to restrict my data collection to only three outside sources. In a quantitative or statistical sense, the responses cannot be said to be representative of all primary teachers in Northern British Columbia, nor can I assume that the practices reported by the participants are duplicated anywhere outside of their respective classrooms. This is not, however to be seen as a

limitation. The in-depth qualitative analysis of the specific practice of a small number of local professionals allowed me to gather focused information on exactly how teachers were using musical strategies. With a qualitative method, I was able to build, through my interviews as collegial interaction, capacity for the development of professional conversations and a community of support for this kind of practice. Additionally, I selected participants purposefully based on their willingness to share their practical ideas and their propensity toward music use or history with music instruction. This meant that the opportunity for specific data gathering was enriched by participants' focus on the subject of music used with language.

I also believe the data to be particularly useful because of the depth of questioning and response that cannot be gathered by a questionnaire. I accept the trustworthiness of the data because of my personal proximity to the participants. So although these data do not allow me to answer the question: *To what extent are all teachers using music in a particular way?,* I can say that the practices reported here are authentic to local some classrooms.

In a way, my lack of experience as a researcher allows for the opportunity of further development of the idea. That is, because the platform of inquiry and specifically, the questions were developed from my teaching experience, my response to the literature review and from my own questions about music in the practice of teaching, perhaps I was not able to develop the questions most suited to my original problem. After conducting the interviews and analyzing the data, I found myself wanting to develop a second loop of questioning to explore the ideas opened by the first round of questioning. Such a response, however, is typical in the spiral of professional inquiry that Halbert, Kaser, and Koehn (2011) have promoted and described. Perhaps a subsequent study, building on the findings and

unanswered questions of this one, would complement or enrich this data and promote further professional learning for interviewer and participants.

Professional inquiry is an appropriate method to identify and explore the most promising practices evident in the literature and in the practice of expert local teachers. The "plan, do, reflect, and revise" cycle that is common to most forms of action research (Brown & Cherkowski, 2011, p. 68) is not present in this stage of this inquiry; however the gathering and analysis of teacher responses are important first steps in engaging in a process of professional learning. In its most technical sense, the word data does not quite describe the products or basis of this project; rather, it is the description of current, working pedagogy and active, craft knowledge that form the key to this unique inquiry methodology.

This study describes the way music is used in primary classrooms and some insight into how teachers achieve, particularly oral language learning outcomes through songs, chants, and rhythm. I explore the experience of primary teachers using these tools in school and make recommendations for distributing promising practices more widely. This project also talks about the kinds of lessons these teachers routinely use and includes artifacts such as original songs and chants and a list of resources in an annotated bibliography.

Rationale

Professional inquiry using semi-structured interviews as a method of qualitative research is particularly appropriate in Northwestern BC. A limited number of very busy teachers potentially willing to participate in any type of study make the sample size too small, in my opinion for a quantitative study. I also believe the kind of information gathered from a questionnaire would not fulfill the purpose of my inquiry. Nor would it garner the type and depth of responses and examples that would answer this project's questions about

how specific music pedagogy is used in the context of language instruction. I also believe the benefits of music as a learning enhancer have been well established, so there is not as great a need to prove a particular connection between music instruction and improved language learning as a quantitative study might do. Interviewing a number of practitioners at length about the nature and breadth of their practice in my area of inquiry allowed me to encapsulate the experience of teaching with music to the extent that the practices could be explored and described for the ultimate purpose of communicating with other teachers.

Inquiry Process

As the information gathering portion of a professional inquiry process, the research here relies on the shared expertise of professionals. It is the knowledge and practice offered by the participants that helped me develop the "wholeness" of vision in closing the oral language gap and begin to sharpen the "awareness" of the discrepancies between ideals and practice, two of the phases of the professional inquiry platform developed by Brown and Cherkowski (2011, p. 70).

Participants

For reasons of accessibility and potential for building the collegial connections of a professional learning community (Dufour and Eaker, 1998) or community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) , I gathered participants for this study from my own jurisdiction, School District 82 (Coast Mountains), particularly the Hazelton area where I currently teach and reside. Because of the willing participation of local colleagues, I did not find that it was necessary for this initial study of the topic to go beyond these boundaries to the further reaches of my district or to neighbouring ones. I interviewed primary teachers who currently use music as part of their language programs and as a general tool within their classrooms.

Purposeful Sampling

Because I examine a particular aspect of primary teaching in this study, that is, the use of music in oral language development, I chose my participants purposefully. In other words, the teachers I interviewed identified themselves as primary teachers who use these strategies. These teachers might be considered experts in the area of music integration, even though they are not music specialists. Participants were recruited from schools using district email announcements, notices in staff rooms, and personal request.

Data Sources

The subject of this study is the work of my colleagues. Gathering the data from the interviews required recording each interview in electronic sound files and then transcribing the records into written form. The transcriptions from these interviews form the body of data. To maintain confidentiality for participants and to aid in the analysis of the information that was shared, I did all the transcribing myself.

Retrospect of My Own Practice

I have chosen myself as one of the participants because of what I believe to be a unique set of practices and skills that I have developed over 20 years in teaching. I used the same set of questions that I prepared for other participants and answered them reflexively using my experience both as a music specialist and primary and intermediate teacher teaching courses across the curriculum.

Participant Interviews

Teachers participated in a 30-40 minute interview and were given an option for follow-up if they wished to add to their comments. I was able to share transcripts and coding with the participants, which was an opportunity for participants to check the accuracy of their

comments and also to support their ideas with additional comments or observations. I compensated teachers for their contributions by offering a $20 gift certificate as a modest token of my appreciation for their time.

Semi-structured Interview Questions

During the inquiry I interviewed three practicing primary teachers using a set of questions designed to encourage a full discussion (see APPENDIX A). I also responded to the questions myself. The discussion and transcription related to each interview was not limited to specific information pertaining to each question but included any related conversation that was offered.

Analysis

Using qualitative coding methods, I summarized the responses of each participant and then searched the transcripts for particular themes within each interview and themes common to a group of participants (Saldana, 2009). In particular, I was looking for new ideas about the way music is used and insight into how successful practice is accomplished. Participants also shared examples of songs or lessons they use with various strategies, which I recorded as part of the body of data. Teachers also shared anecdotes that could stand alone as separate stories of success.

In response to the research questions, I had anticipated that teachers might be inclined to report how they use music for general purposed beyond oral language outcomes, including exercise in the classroom, creating a mood, or reinforcing a learning outcome, and this indeed was the case. Therefore, I report some discussion about general uses and benefits of music in the classroom. This inquiry also included questions about the teachers' own philosophies

and background in music and how they believe a culture of music and singing can be nurtured in a classroom.

To further understanding of how and why the participating teachers use music in the way they do, I attempted to capture the underlying beliefs that informed their day to day practice. Coding allowed me to find themes and commonalities in the responses to extend what we, as a small and developing community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) know about how to use music activities to enhance language. My vision is that the conversations started as part of this process will have longevity and may evolve into opportunities to share our developing expertise with other teachers, both pre-service and experienced, local and further afield.

Ethical Considerations

This study was subject to the scrutiny of the UNBC Research Ethics Board (see APPENDIX B). All participants were given a clear description of the purpose and scope of this study and informed written consent was given (see appendix C), with participants aware of the option to leave the study and withdraw their interview or parts of it at any time. The participants are not identified either in name or station within the presentation of the project so that confidentiality will be protected except in cases where the participant agreed to be named. Participants were given the option to disclose their personal information if they felt that in doing so, they could themselves continue the conversations started by the interviews.

Summary

The strength of this project, I believe, lies within the approach to oral language and music that differs from other music education advocacy work, which tends to focus on the specific benefits of specialist music instruction. Within this project, I acknowledge both the

importance and the scope of oral language instruction at the primary level and look for ways to enhance it through songs, chants, and rhythm activities. I sought evidence in the form of craft knowledge and examples from the participants to see how this is done in other classrooms.

If there exists, as the literature suggests, a positive connection between music and language success, I was interested in discovering how interested local teachers used this connection and to what extent. The answers to my interview questions and the descriptions of promising practices provided by participants may form the basis of professional learning opportunities that have the potential to enrich the classrooms of other teachers. I collected and articulated craft knowledge from participants as a starting point for designing professional learning for pre-service and in-service teachers, as well as to expand my own teaching practice and curriculum leadership related to music.

If the general population of primary teachers were asked how they use music to enrich classroom life and children's language development, I suspect that many would say that they use it very little. For me, that answer would highlight a lost opportunity. So, if there is an afterlife for the analysis from the data gathered in this study, given what is known, the questions that will need to be asked are: *What prevents teachers from using these important teaching tools?* and *What impediments need to be removed in order to implement this body of knowledge and strategies?* Is the barrier to implementation simply a lack of personal experience and comfort with musical activities or is it a lack of information about their benefits? Is it inadequate university preparation or in-service learning? Is it failure to initiate or support implementation at the district level? These are questions for further inquiry that I hope my study will stimulate. Their answers will provide a route to using the craft knowledge

gathered in this study to take action that will result in more teachers using music activities more confidently in their classrooms.

CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

"The function of music is to release us from the tyranny of conscious thought" (Beecham, 1978).

In this chapter, I look directly at the material from the interview transcripts to compare and contrast the responses of the participants. I look at how their comments directly and indirectly answer the question of how teachers are currently using music to support their teaching of language in the areas of speaking and listening in particular. Their descriptions of musical strategies also extend to the use of music for other purposes besides the teaching of language, which I believe is an added benefit of this inquiry.

An Introduction to the Participants

Teacher participants for this study were purposefully chosen from two schools in my community. I had originally planned to broadcast my request for participants in a wider area, hoping to improve the rigor of the study with more divergent sources. As it turned out, I was rewarded for my local focus by the richly diverse set of responses I retrieved from colleagues who were close at hand. I was pleased by the way each participant chose to answer the identical set of questions in different and unexpected ways, prompting me to understand my questions differently and follow them up with many new and unanswered ones.

As different as my participants are from one another, they have these similarities: all three are women who live and teach in a small community. As a fourth participant, I am a male teacher who also lives and teaches in a small community. All four of us have seniority in the profession and in the community; none of us have lived here fewer than 20 years and one teacher's family and ethnic origins are here. Participants currently teach students at the kindergarten level, grade one, and grade three respectively, on a full time basis. My own

current assignment gives me one day each week with primary children, kindergarten to grade three. Two of the teachers specifically asked not to be identified either by name or context, so to respect their wishes, I describe their situations sparingly and introduce them here by the code used in their interview transcripts.

Participant "A" is a teacher of older primary students in a mid-sized elementary school (less than 200 students) in Northwestern BC. She has an extensive background in formal music training and for part of her career taught music as an itinerant general music teacher to kindergarten to grade seven students. She spoke of her personal background with music in cultural settings and talked about the natural way she felt music was integrated into her day-to-day teaching routines. Choral speech, unison poetry reading or recitation, and song performances were ways in which she described children coming together rhythmically and musically to improve their own speaking and listening. Music for movement, classroom transitions, gym, and relaxation were the extra benefits of music that she described.

Participant "B" teaches kindergarten in a mid-sized elementary school in Northwestern BC and talked about her growing involvement with music as an adult, taking piano lessons and participating in activities like community band and a local ukulele group. She described how these experiences gave her a new ability to accompany students with instrument playing. She provided many examples of musical and rhythmic lesson strategies that encourage children to vocalize and help emerging speakers to form words correctly.

The third participant, who agreed to be identified, is Dr. Jane Smith, a Gitksan woman who teaches early primary at a mid-sized elementary school. Her responses spoke to the strengths of using culturally relevant material to teach life lessons, reinforce ideas, and bring children together to express themselves musically and rhythmically with language. Dr.

Smith also referred to a peer-reviewed journal article (Smith, 2000) that she authored that describes the use of traditional storytelling modes and characters in original stories and songs. This article is currently being used as a teaching resource in local area schools and is described in the annotated bibliography (see APPENDIX D).

Participants all had some form of musical training to the extent that they feel comfortable singing with children and playing an instrument and they reported to believe that they have more confidence in this area than their peers. Musical training varied from family singing, singing in church choirs, and informal lessons from friends to high school band, piano lessons, and university level instruction for music teachers. Music experience also varied from informal community singing to music teaching and directing in school, church, and in the community. All participants, including me, are involved in music at the school and community levels. All made some comment intimating the extent to which music was a naturally integral part of their lives, such as "it's just in me" (A, p. 4).

I found it interesting that the participant with the least amount of formal music training was the most involved in music in school, community, and church. She is also a teacher who, based on my interpretation of her responses, appears able to integrate language instruction with music in a natural and seamless way. This suggests that a background that included formal music instruction is not necessarily a predictor of music use in the classroom generally or in language instruction specifically.

Variations in cultural approaches to music and teaching among participants were quite pronounced. One teacher talked about support for music culture in her family, through her Ukrainian heritage, and another implied a culture of music among friends. The way Dr. Smith described her use of Gitksan songs and stories demonstrated a strong cultural

connection to the way music could be used and it became obvious to me that story, song, and culture are integrated in a most natural way and, in fact, are inseparable.

Themes

In my analysis of participant responses, including my own, a compare and contrast exercise presented various themes that were threaded through the responses. I have organized them here in sections, beginning with how participants exploit the general benefits of music. After noting my surprise at the prevalence of commercially recorded music in participants' classes, I move to describe how music is used to stimulate movement. *Storytelling* and *songwriting and drama* are important themes that categorize the function of the musical strategies that this small group of teachers used. The essential *joy of music* was also a significant theme. As could be expected from the questions that I asked, teachers also focused on the benefits of music for *oral language development* and the need – even for themselves – for *professional learning opportunities* to build strategies for enriching language through music and to add to one's musical repertoire.

Exploiting the General Benefits of Music

Overall, I was most surprised by the many and varying ways in which teachers reported using music in different forms to accomplish a range of objectives or suggested the potential for music to do so. The most immediate and common response was that music is "great for settling kids down" (B, p. 1) and that music "really gets their attention" (Smith, p. 10). This classroom management strategy occurred through the use of a particular recording, by singing a phrase or part of a song, and with interactive singing or chanting.

Of course, inasmuch as there are infinite variant forms of music, there are innumerable uses for music and one teacher in the same response talked about both the power

of music to calm children and to excite them or stimulate a viscerally active response. "It helps to relax, it helps to calm, and on the other hand you can also use it to excite, get them energized about something" (A, p. 3). So depending on its use, the tool can elicit opposite responses for specific purposes.

Recorded forms of music and singing by the teacher are used to initiate routines, particularly among younger students, such as cleaning up, making a transition to a new activity, lining up for a trip down the hallway, cooling down in the gym after strenuous activity, or beginning many other classroom activities. Teachers seemed to feel that taking advantage of the power of music in this way was most valuable and indicated frequent use of these motivating and attention getting strategies involving music.

The second most commonly reported way to use music was as a mnemonic device. "It's an easier way sometimes to learn concepts if it's put to music" (B, p. 1). The participants all talked about the potential value of songs to help students learn and memorize in the same way that an advertising jingle can "stick" in your mind. From learning students' names to math facts, curriculum content, moral lessons, and words in another language, songs, chants, and musical phrases are seen by these teachers as invaluable teaching tools. In most cases these songs came from outside sources such as the "Intelli-tunes: Skip Counting" (see APPENDIX D) or tunes that are teaching traditions, such as "The Clean Up Song" used in kindergarten.

Commercial Recorded Music

I was also surprised at the extent to which commercial sources of music in the form of popular music CDs or internet downloads were used or were even mentioned when I asked questions about music use. I had not envisioned commercial or trade music as part of my

project when it was conceived and I had not anticipated that teachers would report using CDs as an implementation of song in the classroom. All participants reported using a CD player in the gym for general play time or daily physical activity in the classroom and not just for a structured type of aerobic exercise. They noticed that the children either "seem kind of lost if the music isn't blaring in there" (Smith, p. 1) or they were stimulated to move to the music or they were, in a sense, set free to move by the music. One teacher even believed that some students resisted participating in musical activities in the class because their only association with music was wild movement and they were apparently worried that music would cause other children to lose control.

My surprise at this response is in no way a denial of the legitimate use of commercial recordings in teaching practice; on the contrary, it is a discovery of its value. There is, indeed a range of uses for commercially recorded music being employed by my colleagues and a great many resources to fill that need from pop music widely available to recordings made especially for primary teachers.

The responses I gathered also showed me the value of having music recordings to encourage relaxation in the classroom. From the kindergarten teacher: "I like to use music for settling, like when we're working on something, like the students will be colouring or whatever and I can say to them 'Okay, if we're working quietly, I can put some nice music on to listen to so that can be our background music'" (B, p. 2). As I said, these uses of recorded music reported by the participants are somewhat tangential to my focus of music and oral language instruction, but this use seems so surprisingly prevalent and valuable that it merits significant mention here.

General Curricular Applications of Music

Among each of the participants' responses, there was mention of the power of music to aid memory and particularly for learning content across the curriculum. The grade three teacher reported that she regularly uses a specially designed set of recordings by Ron Brown (2000) for memorizing math facts in addition and multiplication. "You put on a little song for skip counting that goes: (sung) five, ten, fifteen, twenty, twenty five… and they're singing down the hall. And if you just said here's your skip counting pattern, you have to learn this, they wouldn't glom onto it as fast" (A, p. 2). She also talked about a set of science "songs about the planets and songs about the trees" that she found useful.

Dr. Smith relies heavily on original Gitksanimx songs set to familiar and original tunes to enhance Gitksanimx language instruction. "I have written a bunch of songs, and I teach them that and they learn it so much quicker than they do with me repeating it and having them say it back to me" (Smith, p. 1). In her experience the learning of the Gitksan language has the added benefit of helping students improve their English.

Music and Movement

All participants made some sort of case for the value of music as a movement motivator. Teachers routinely use a CD player in the gym for exercise or movement break in the classroom with audio recordings or exercise videos. The kindergarten teacher said: "I find those breaks are great. Not sitting for too long a time…do a song that has some actions to it. Everyone feels better and they're more settled for learning. Get blood flowing to the brain" (B, p. 3).

In the classroom, songs with actions become much more than exercise. In my experience, the physical and musical parts of the songs cannot be separated. I teach melody, words, and actions together so that one component reinforces the other.

The grade three teacher described using the song "Stompa" by Serena Ryder as an example of how changes in music tempo, meter, and rhythm can inspire different kinds of movement. "It starts off really slowly so they do lots of stretches and lunges and by the end of it they're stomping and marching around the room" (A, p. 3).

Storytelling

Here is where culture, music, and language make a wonderfully integrated connection. My interview with Dr. Smith yielded the most glaring anomaly among the participants in terms of the use of music in language instruction and, in my mind, the strongest musical connection to language. As part of her daily practice with grade one students, Dr. Smith routinely tells the stories of her culture that were sung and told to her by her grandmother. Song and story are so bound together in this context that they must be presented together. When she is telling the story of "The Owl," for example she says that "The Owl has a song and I sing that song and if they're kind of not paying attention, as soon as they hear that song, they're right back with me" (Smith, p. 1). In this way, students are engaged on more than one level and oral literature and song naturally find their way into the children's own vocabularies. Students are at the same time connected to history, culture, music, and language.

Dr. Smith also talked about the value of music to retrieve the ideas or lessons of a story. She explained: "I'll use the story to remind the kids of the lesson that was learned from that story and if they still don't get it, I'll sing a few bars of the song that went with that story and I have their attention and the other kids are paying attention also because they know somebody's in trouble" (Smith, p. 2). She says that some of these story and song

pieces have much broader applications even outside of school and community. She has used this to communicate to outsiders about the need for environmental stewardship, for example.

I think we can suppose that like people of many world traditions, Gitksan people have been using this musical narrative style of teaching children and adults the lessons and values as well as practical knowledge for generations innumerable. I see from Dr. Smith's responses that this goes beyond the obvious functions of passing on collective wisdom and perpetuating indigenous culture and actually builds language capacity in children. Children are motivated to listen to the song-stories of their favourite archetypal characters and are likely to repeat them to each other as well as participate in discussions of the lesson. The proof of this, says Dr. Smith is that the children are quick to interpret the moral of the story or the implications of each character's actions.

Storytelling also finds an application with commercially produced recordings such as Robert Minden Ensemble's "The Boy Who Wanted to Talk to Whales," (1991) and "Vivaldi's Ring of Mystery" from the Classical Kids series by Susan Hammond (1989), both of which I have used in the context of story development and music instruction. In both of these examples, the music becomes the story and beyond the context of the story, students learn how story and music are mutually integrated. In my experience and that of Dr. Smith, the stories bear limitless repetition. As they are told and listened to over and over, children grow more familiar and yet never tired of the stories and begin to recite them themselves. As they do so, they are rehearsing not just story syntax but also conventional oral sentence structure, pronunciation, and voice modulation and inflexion. The stories acquire personal meanings that are deeply connected with the students' emotional responses.

Songwriting and Drama

This is another area where responses of participants diverged significantly. All of the teachers reported some connection to creativity and music, that is, generating responses from students and fitting them into some kind of composition. The kindergarten teacher uses the song "Down by the Bay" among others to help students find rhyming words to fit at the end of a line in each new verse. For example: "Did you ever see a grouse that was kissing a…" and students might offer "mouse" as a rhyme. (In my experience, students will also offer suggestions like "grape" because at this stage they are looking for similarities without necessarily distinguishing initial sounds from word ending sounds.)

Dr. Smith who also teaches Gitksanimix as a second language in school and in the community frequently uses songs for language learning. She will take a familiar tune and translate English words into Gitksanimix or set other Gitksan words to a familiar tune. This teacher also generates creative responses from children in the form of actions and movement for songs that she sings with them. The children volunteer ideas of how to animate each song. This connects them to song meaning and body awareness.

There are two ways that I use songwriting with students. Using a whole language approach (Johnson, 1987), I ask students to brainstorm a list of ideas on a certain topic. Then we look for pairs of rhyming words and groups of words that have a particularly melodic or rhythmic sound or feel to them. Then we build a verse or chorus depending on what happens to emerge first and try to experiment with notes and chords until we find a melody that fits and the song grows from there. The other creative approach I use with children and songs is to take a familiar song, something with an implied narrative or simple story line, and build a kind of opera around it using suggestions from the students gathered in brainstorm fashion.

The teacher and students extract ideas from the song that lend themselves well to acting and then design props and movement to build the musical play.

In my song writing projects with children, I have come to rely on a few simple rules. I tend to choose melodies that are more stepwise than skipwise; that is, the melody goes up and down note by note rather than jumping up and down at greater intervals. I also use a lot of repeated short phrases to facilitate quick learning for young children. Our words are usually organized in short rhyming couplets because these are easiest to understand and invent for children. As in the original *Jicama* song (see APPENDIX E), we try to find words that have a particularly pleasing assonance or roll off the tongue in an enjoyable way, as in another old song: "Three six nine, the goose drank wine, the monkey chewed tobacco on the street car line (Ellis, 1965, from the song *Rubber Dolly*).

As with any creative project with children, what drives the engagement for the activity is that students are working with their own ideas and they truly own the project and the song. Not only are they communicating the things they want to talk about, but they thrill to see their own work in print and hear it sung in a fully formed song with instrumental accompaniment. To perform their own work in front of the whole school or for parents brings audience and real purpose to what they are doing.

Student engagement with the creative approach is higher also because a different set of skills is involved. When we read other songs off the chart paper to sing them, only the strong readers are able to follow the page and the others are more likely to be disengaged. Rote learning and generating our own words on the page allow even reluctant readers and emerging readers to participate more freely.

I think songwriting is particularly valuable in building language skills. The initial songwriting tasks of sharing ideas and writing them down and organizing them into categories are sophisticated ones and therefore must be teacher guided. Asking students to find rhyming pairs and rhythmic "fit" require them to isolate syllables as in matching ending sounds in two different words. Rhythmic fit depends on an intuitive understanding of word parts and syllable emphasis. In the phrase "Jicama potato" (pronounced "HI-ka-ma" with a short "i" as in "hit") the emphasized syllables "ji" and "ta" fall on the same beat subdivision within the musical measure so that the way they are sung matches the way they are spoken. The phrase "Blackberry blueberry" doesn't fit quite as well because it needs another syllable to match the rhythm pattern. I might point out to students that "Elderberry" or "Black-a-berry blueberry" seem to fit better (see APPENDIX E).

Where I believe songwriting is valuable as an oral language tool is in the opportunity for enriched speaking and listening practice and the meta-language conversation that naturally accompanies the process. Students must play with the sound of the words in their mouths before being able to suggest a use for the word within the musical phrase or song.

The dramatic elements of poetry and choral speech performance, particularly with older primary students, support language development particularly well. The grade three teacher said "We're into poetry and that ties in beautifully. With poetry the rhyming word is generally at the end of each line so they can see the rhyming patterns and the word families to help with spelling" (A, p. 7). In addition to understanding language through the recognition of patterns, she talked about how performance itself motivated students to pay attention to conventions of speech, particularly in pieces of unison spoken word. She suggested that there is a naturally strong imperative among peers to work together in

situations of presentation. "It helps with articulation. You know, breathing, making sure they're getting enough breath, volume. You ask a child to read a poem they're going to mumble through it. You ask them to sing it with some friends, the volume increases all of a sudden" (A, p. 8).

As I learned from the studies in my literature review, skills such as phoneme recognition are essential prerequisites to speaking, reading, and writing. These song-building and dramatic tasks not only help students isolate and recognize sounds, they rehearse the sound in different ways and compel students to exercise conventions of speech pattern and pronunciation.

Joy in Music

In one way or another, the participants all shared a sense of enjoyment of music with children. The kindergarten teacher said "There's just joy in music, the joy of having music in your life. You try to incorporate it wherever you can…It's just nice to have it in the room. We're winding down to the big holiday, let's just listen to music and enjoy our time together" (B, p. 2). Dr. Smith says "They'll sing their hearts out" (p. 5) during song times with other classes and some students who appear to be shy in other situations will ask to sing solos. Among older students I have often noticed how the opportunity to sing, dance, or play together, especially after a busy hour of school work or independent seat work, brings joy and renewed energy.

Participant B shared a story of a boy who just couldn't sit still the moment any music came on, particularly a piece that had a built-in feeling of building excitement. I enjoyed this story for her description of unbridled exuberance.

> You could hear him listening to the faintest part of the song at the beginning and nobody else in the class was kind of paying attention and then it builds and gets so intense, and his whole body was moving, you could see him getting so excited about it (p. 4).

Oral Language Development

Children with apparent speech problems seem to be a particular concern for the two teachers of younger children. They explained that some children were nearly impossible to understand, but expressed the belief that singing and chanting could help them. The kindergarten teacher said "If you have kids with speech problems like sound substitutions, or totally missing some sounds, I'm hoping that through repetition and practicing and doing these little poems all together that they would get those sounds that they need" (B, p. 5).

Part of what the kindergarten teacher, for example, believes she is doing in teaching songs, rhymes, and chants, is filling in a home culture gap where she feels children may not be getting finger plays and nursery rhymes taught to them. "If parents aren't going to these early intervention programs and stuff, and they're not doing these things with their kids, they're going to be lost…I try to type [the songs and poems] and send them home to help the parents learn them" (B, p. 5). The grade one teacher also expressed dismay that nursery rhymes were not as widely known among preschool children as she thought they should be, suggesting that the repetition of these age old rhymes and stories would be beneficial to very young children.

With older children, the focus seems to be more on group singing and chanting with the goal of improving overall diction. The grade three teacher said that it helps "fluency in reading. When they can hear that it's not so robotic, I think poetry and using poetry through

song helps to feel that rhythm, that flow of language…When they realize they are reading a poem or singing a song together as a group to create a final product they have to actually slow down and wait for somebody else or speed up" (A, p. 2).

This age-old, group approach to teaching the "feel" of language continues to be useful across grades and content areas. Just as children naturally seem to fall into step in a group movement activity, most children seem to gravitate towards unison expression. The grade three teacher explained how reluctant readers fall in with their peers to self-improve choral reading aloud. "A lot of early readers come in [to my class] and they read word for word and then when they can feel that rhythm…" (A, p. 2) and they learn to read with more expression and natural feeling.

All of the participants agreed that speaking ability and literacy skills seem, in most cases, to be linked. That is, although there are exceptions, the early speakers are also early readers and writers and that by providing opportunities for enriched speaking and listening and rhythmic group speaking and singing we encourage the development of a broad range of literacy skills. "The connection between learning and music is massive" (A, p. 10).

Where language and pronunciation is more of a challenge, music becomes invaluable. Dr. Smith says "With language, with our language, it's so difficult, then I'll chant it out or I'll sing it and they'll sing it right back to me and if I ask them to say it back to me and they can't" (p. 5).

Participant A describes another incident of when her own preschool children were repeatedly exposed to a song-story recording. The participant makes a connection to this activity and a strong reading ability shown later in her school years.

> "I have a video of them just from [when she was] little retelling (she was maybe two or three) the three bears and (sung) 'Once upon a time in a nursery rhyme…' She had all her little chairs out and she went around acting it out. She was always a great reader" (p. 10)

Teachers also described music related activities such as calendar time, clean up, or story time, where oral language development is an incidental byproduct of that activity. Students participate in these routine events in many cases with songs or chants that allow them to rehearse language. The repetitive nature of these pieces means that they carry them home with them and into their personal playtimes alone and with siblings.

Professional Development

All three respondents agreed that the need for more professional learning opportunities does exist in this area. Although not all of the participants said they would feel comfortable giving a presentation in a workshop of this nature, they expressed an appetite for it, particularly if it were to yield more resources and teaching material. "I get tired of the same songs. It's nice to change it up" (B, p. 7). Teacher collaboration in the form of sharing sessions may be a valuable way for teachers to build capacity in the form of ideas and learning materials with each other. The kindergarten teacher recently hosted such a session in her school where, in round robin fashion, teachers meet and each bring copies of a favourite resource and explain its value and how it can be used.

The perceived barriers to music use seemed to be mostly about reticence of teachers to use their voice in front of children. The vulnerability in the sharing of oneself through singing and playing seems less of an impediment to more experienced teachers but still a significant barrier to most. One teacher said "I don't sing great, but I sing." Like so many

other teaching skills, it seems that the skills teachers need to appear musically confident in front of children develop naturally with exposure and practice.

Resources and Artifacts

Annotated Bibliography (See APPENDIX D)

An appendix appears in this document that catalogues a mere handful of books, recordings, and internet websites that were offered by the participants, including me, as well-used and useful. This is by no means an exhaustive list and is only meant to represent the kinds of things that are currently in use by participants in this study. Some of the titles are very old by academic standards and by the well worn condition of the bindings have been used frequently. From my point of view and the report of my participants, these are the ageless, "old chestnuts" that continually work well with children regardless of time and place.

Original Songs (See APPENDIX E)

I have included among the artifacts three pieces, each recently written by a group of young students with me in a music class over a number of periods, and one written by me, based on a traditional rhyme. The first of these original songs is called *The Seasons Song* and was a result of a brainstorming activity and then categorizing the list of things the students and I like to do. We noticed that the offerings suggested by the students fit nicely into seasonal categories and decided to make a verse for each season.

School Bell is a song that was written to capture the song's inspiration, the melodic sounding broken chord, or in musician's terms, the arpeggio which is our school bell. At our school, to begin each day and to separate breaks and end the day, we have four notes played in succession: G5, B5, D6, and G6. We changed it into a "singable" key and using a similar

whole language style process including brainstorming, categorizing, experimenting with rhythm, drafting writing, and experimenting some more, we developed verses to describe each portion of the day. The most recent song, *Jicama Potato*, was written with another group of grade one students to explore rhythmically fun sounding words like "Jicama." This follows a different kind of song writing tradition more common to Latin forms, where the song is more about a rhythmic phrase or motif than words or melody or chord pattern. As it relates to oral language development, the students in this exercise are encouraged to play not just with syntax and rhyme but with word sounds and syllable emphasis.

All three songs are recorded on colour-coded chart paper and displayed on the chart easel with the regular song repertoire that I use with all students in the music room. This gives the song a purposeful life of its own and gives ownership of the song and the activities in the music room to the students.

Another original action song I teach by rote to kindergarten students is a traditional skipping rhyme set to a simple repetitive tune. *Two Little Dickie Birds* is taught together with fingerplay actions and includes an enchanting magic trick easily performed by small children. Each child puts a "Dickie Bird" in the form of a small sticker or piece of tape on the nail of each middle finger and retracts the other fingers into a fist. As the song gets to "Fly away Peter…" the child flicks her right hand behind her head while switching her prominent finger to the ring finger making "Peter" "disappear." This has uncanny appeal for small children first because of the supernatural quality of the presentation and secondly because they can learn this trick for themselves.

Chapter Summary

To communicate the findings from this research, I decided to first describe the three primary teachers and their professional context while remaining discreet to honour the request of two participants for confidentiality. What I found most interesting in comparing their responses was that even though there were great differences in their level of training and musical life experiences, they all found ways to innovate with music and were able to exploit the many benefits of music. In response to specific questions about music and language development, they were able to describe musical strategies such as group singing, choral speech, poetry reading and recitation, storytelling, song writing, movement, and rhythm patterning that they used to support language arts outcomes.

I organized the reporting of their responses by categorizing their ideas into themes that became apparent after reading and re-reading their transcripts. I had anticipated a lot of discussion about songs and nursery rhymes and finger plays used with young children and I was surprised by the strength of traditional Gitksan storytelling with music as a language strategy. Exploring song writing in my own practice and creativity within the practice of the participants gave me new ideas about the potential for this practice as well. The idea of building language on the unison expression of students also became a strong idea that was threaded through the responses.

Although not a lengthy part of any of the discussions, the acute level of need in the area of language development for some children was a point made by each of the participants. Each made some mention of children whose vulnerability because of inability to speak clearly or read by grade three was apparent. Each expressed hope in the many strategies they were trying with children in order to build language ability, including the use of the musical ideas we discussed. This chapter concludes with a description of the resource

and artifact appendices included to share the musical resources that are the foundation of practices described by myself and the three participants.

CHAPTER V:

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

"I hear music, Mighty fine music, And anytime I think my world is wrong, I get me out of bed and sing this song" (Loesser, 1940).

In this chapter, I reiterate what I see as the most effective and well used music-related teaching strategies: the methods that were most prominently reported in the interviews and the ones I see as either having made the most difference or the ones with the most potential. I also emphasize what I see as the need to support and provide for the implementation of these strategies through opportunities for teacher sharing and increased access to teacher music resources for practicing and pre-service teachers.

Memory and Feeling: The Two Famous Talents of Music

Most people born before 1970 can tell you exactly what year the Battle of New Orleans was fought, where it happened, who was involved, and even what the soldiers took for lunch thanks to a snappy, repetitive number penned by a creative social studies teacher from Arkansas. Jimmy Driftwood wrote *The Battle of New Orleans* in 1958 and set it to a traditional American fiddle tune and gave the world a history lesson not likely to be forgotten. Almost every person born since 2000, when asked to recite the alphabet, will quietly begin singing a little ditty that sounds like *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star*.

The mnemonic power of music, that is, the ability of a tune along with its words to become lodged in one's memory, seems to be what teachers think of first when they imagine what music can do for their students. Every one of the people involved in this study reported exploiting this phenomenon in some way for language instruction and helping their students

commit other curricular content to memory. This strategy covers an age range from kindergarten to adult learners.

Adjusting the mood feelings of students seems to be the other accessible and widely used job performed by music. Teachers see the value of using recorded music to enhance the general well-being of a group of students, incite them to movement, and induce relaxation. Every song heard for the second time and onwards seems to come with its own set of memories, emotions, and physical feelings and the teachers who participated in this study knew how to use this in their classrooms.

Getting Their Attention

If complaints made in staff rooms are any indication, the problem of how to engage students is the biggest challenge faced by teachers, and I believe this to be universally true. Some of the initial and most common responses of the participants told me that getting students' attention or inspiring engagement was a favourite use of music among teachers. Music possesses this power and is used in many ways. Teachers routinely use a song that has a connection to a particular idea or action or story or they use a rhythmic device such as an *echo clap-patsch* (clap and pat thighs) pattern or a recording that allows just enough time for students to be drawn in to a lesson or complete a transition from one learning activity to another.

Unexpected Results: Storytelling and Songwriting

The reports of the participants and one in particular demonstrated a very strong application of music in storytelling, particularly in the transmission of First Nations stories and traditions. Although aware of the importance and extent of cultural practices in our schools, I did not quite anticipate how this could be linked to music or that the two could be

so profoundly integrated. Traditional stories are bound with music in this way: the teller brings out the story in the usual way except that characters are introduced each with their own song, perhaps accompanied by drumming. The song functions to draw listeners back to the story and it can remind listeners about the lessons taught by story, even long after the story is over. This is an authentic cultural practice and not necessarily one that can be expected of every teacher. This practice of music-enriched storytelling is so compelling in its ability to engage its listeners, encourage participation, and communicate cultural values that effort should be made to see that this type of cultural instruction is widely implemented by authentic instructors. Further, the technique of using a particular song to evoke memories of a character lesson can be adapted for use outside of cultural traditions.

Creative or inventive approaches to music with language like songwriting, musical role play, or drama were also reported by the participants to be successful participation and language builders. Students create original songs through group brainstorm process or share ideas about movement that can be connected to a song and in this way own their learning and experience the joy of creativity.

This is corroborated by the work of Smith (2000) described in Chapter II. This study showed particular success using the strategy of adapting well-known folk songs and children's music in order to teach sound discrimination and to practice these skills through singing and songwriting. To connect with the participants' ideas of using music to reinforce learning outcomes from other teaching content areas, Smith found music writing as a way to do just that.

Music and Oral Language Instruction

From the point of view of this study, the most important questions to ask now are: *Are teachers able to bridge the oral language gap addressed in Chapter I using music?* and *Can teachers see this making a positive difference in the overall language abilities of young students?* Based on my analysis of these interview data, I believe the strongest practices that speak to these questions are seen in the way teachers teach rhymes, chants, poems, music-enriched storytelling, and songs. When children sing and speak chorally in unison, they are rehearsing fluency of speech, phoneme recognition, and initial reading skills in ways that are compelling and engaging. Whole language songwriting tasks, particularly in group instruction, also reinforce concepts of rhyme, fluency, syllable emphasis, diction, and overall sense of composition form. Teachers see acquisition of these skills as language builders and ways to advantage young learners, particularly those who enter kindergarten with fewer language skills than their peers.

From the literature that I reviewed for this study, we learned about the rather specific value of music instruction and its propensity to improve the ability of children to recognize parts of words and sounds and build other phonics skills such as pattern recognition or sequencing, particularly as reported by Bolduc (2008). The emphasis in these studies tended to rely on work that was done by music specialists or private music tutors rather than regular classroom practitioners. What I saw in the responses of my participants was the use of musical and rhythmic strategies implemented by regular teachers in natural, authentic ways and integrated into the day-to-day routines of the primary classroom and achieving the very skills mentioned in the literature.

As we see in the Language Arts IRP (2006) for the early grades, oral language is the basic building block with which learners construct meaning in school. Through social

interaction, communication with peers and teachers, creative expression, and cultural participation, students build the vocabulary of meaning and understanding that might just fundamentally support their whole school career. Students make meaning not just through, in the traditional sense, listening, speaking, drawing, viewing and later reading and writing, but also, and maybe for some children more importantly, through all the musical activities mentioned here.

Cornett and Smithrim (2001) refer to this idea as "arts integration" or "teaching with, in, and through the arts" (p. 34). In this way, the arts, or as in the case of this study, music become not just a topic of study or a focus to achieve music education learning outcomes, but a way to teach using music as a meaning builder across disciplines. For example, a song or chant that happens to be part of a language arts lesson can enhance enjoyment of learning, reinforce concepts of steady beat, rhythm, and pattern, build participation, communicate the ideas that are in the content of the piece and improve reading fluency.

Areas for Further Study

Analyzing the transcripts from each of the three interviews as well as reflecting on my own practice led me to two ideas for further study: a) a second round of questioning to build detail on teachers' initial descriptions of music use and b) purposeful observation to see how a skillful teacher engages children in storytelling, songwriting, singing, and chanting. To say that the study suggested more questions than it answered is not a failure of purpose, but rather an invitation to maintain an attitude of inquiry and an appetite to shine a light on the practices that are shown to be meeting the needs of students as described in this study. Further inquiry, possibly collaborative inquiry among participants supported by the format of an ongoing Professional Learning Community (PLC), would also yield a greater breadth of

artifacts and resources, including more specific strategies and materials in the form of songs, poems, chants, lesson plans, and original pieces.

This also suggests some opportunities for collaboration with other education professionals. Speech and Language Pathologists or teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing, for example could be questioned on how music strategies discussed here and other ones used in this field help students with language difficulties. This could be a valuable source of evidence firstly because of the intensive nature of small group instruction and secondly because of rigorous tracking associated with pathology.

There are also implications for my own practice. My current assignment puts me in a varied mixture of teaching situations throughout the week and allows me to work with young children some days and high school band students on others. In many ways the study has confirmed what I believe about how music can be used and how its benefits reach far beyond learning to sing or play an instrument. I now seize opportunities for musical teaching whether or not I am in the music room or hiding behind an instrument. Integrated musical teaching means having students of all ages in many situations vocalize in creative, patterned, cooperative, and sometimes melodic ways. As a teacher leader, this means modeling and encouraging my colleagues to pursue the same.

Recommendations

In my quest to find out how teachers are using music to improve oral language abilities among young children, I found that the teachers that I chose to interview are indeed making excellent use of songs, rhymes, chants, rhythmic speech, and poems to accomplish many things including speaking fluency, diction, memory, and an understanding of word parts and language patterns. I found that these teachers are using different strategies for

different age groups and each teacher uses a common set of strategies and unique musical repertoire materials to accomplish this. Based on the wishes of the teachers I interviewed, I recommend that these sets of materials be expanded so that more teachers, first of all, see the value of building their own musical repertoires, and secondly, have access to a broad range of songs, rhymes, chants, and poems. This can be done through group sharing sessions, whether *grade level-specific*, such as a kindergarten teachers sharing session, or *topic-specific*, such as a music workshop with a focus on classroom songwriting using familiar melodies. Besides this collaborative approach, teachers can build materials and methods through professional development presented by teachers who feel they have expertise here. This study has helped me develop my own capacity as an instructional leader in this area.

I also recommend that music become a strong part of teacher training programs for all primary teacher candidates, not just for the purpose of meeting music prescribed learning outcomes but to experience examples of how the musical strategies found in this study build language and meaning. I believe teachers-in-training as well as practicing teachers need to be encouraged to adopt a lifelong learning approach to music where music making is not merely relegated to the realm of the music specialist. In the same way that the participants who claimed no formal music training found joy and teaching success using music, these teaching strategies belong to all regardless of musical background. Confidence comes with experience, not qualification.

Chapter Summary

Through the interviews, the participants and I were able to consider the many language related needs of young children in our schools and the hope that we have in what music can do for them. We discussed our current practice of using musical and rhythmic

strategies in the day-to-day routines of the regular primary classroom and how these strategies work as language builders. We also talked about ways to strengthen and broaden this practice through sharing sessions and professional learning opportunities and encourage newly fledged teachers.

This study has given me insight into the big question of how children are helped to acquire language in the early years of elementary school, particularly speaking and listening. Although the scope of the project only allowed me to delve into the reported practice of a few teachers, I was able to explore in detail how the particular function of music in its many forms in the classroom can contribute to learning in this area. Teachers exploit the powers of music in many ways in the classroom, but the practices that appear to have the biggest impact for oral language development are the ones connected with music-enriched storytelling, songwriting, movement, and above all, unison speech and singing.

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APPENDIX A

GENERAL INTERVIEW GUIDE

You agreed to participate in this study because you believe that music activities can be used to encourage oral language development or to meet the oral language outcomes of the BC English Language Arts curriculum. You may also have some favourite or effective classroom strategies that you would like to share. I am providing these questions in writing in advance of our interview, so that, if you wish, you have time to think about your responses before our conversation.

Questions

1. Briefly, what is your own personal music background and training?
2. What do you believe music can do for children in the regular classroom?
3. Can you describe how you use music and rhythm in your classroom? Specifically, what kinds of musical strategies do you use in your day to day practice?
4. Do you create a particular niche for music within the culture of your classroom, such as break time, transitions, celebrations, routines, or rituals? How do you establish this?
5. Describe how you came to use music in this way in the classroom.
6. Can you describe an example of when you noticed a child or children respond verbally to music in an unexpected way or in a way they did not normally respond?
7. Do you find that some students don't respond at all to music?

8. To what extent do you use music to accomplish language arts outcomes rather than music curriculum outcomes? What about oral language outcomes in particular?
9. What do you think are some possible barriers to you or other teachers using music in this way?
10. Do you think your practice would benefit from implementation or workshops and materials on music in the primary classroom? Would you be willing (hypothetically speaking) to be a presenter in such a workshop?
11. Are there any particular musical techniques or pieces that you would be willing to share?

APPENDIX B: RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD AND DISTRICT APPROVAL

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA

RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD

MEMORANDUM

To: Orlando Wiebe
CC: Willow Brown

From: Michael Murphy, Chair
Research Ethics Board

Date: February 1, 2013

Re: **E2012.1212.166.00**
How Primary Teachers Use Music to Support Oral Language Development

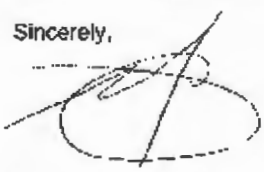
Thank you for submitting revisions to the REB regarding the above-noted proposal to the Research Ethics Board. Your revisions have been approved.

We are pleased to issue approval for the above named study for a period of 12 months from the date of this letter. Continuation beyond that date will require further review and renewal of REB approval. Any changes or amendments to the protocol or consent form must be approved by the Research Ethics Board.

If you have any questions on the above or require further clarification please feel free to contact Rheanna Robinson at reb@unbc.ca in the Office of Research.

Good luck with your research.

Sincerely,



Dr. Michael Murphy
Chair, Research Ethics Board

Coast Mountains Board of Education
School District 82

3211 Kenney Street, Terrace, B.C. V8G 3E9
Tel. (250) 635-4931 or 1-855-635-4931 · Fax 1-888-290-4786 · www.cmsd.bc.ca

December 10, 2012

University of Northern British Columbia
3333 University Way
Prince George, B.C. V2N 4Z9

Attention: Ms. Rheanna Robinson, Research Office

Dear Ms. Robinson:

RE: ORLANDO WIEBE – MASTER OF EDUCATION RESEARCH

On behalf of Coast Mountains Board of Education School District 82, we are pleased to support Mr. Wiebe's proposed Master of Education research in Multi-Disciplinary Leadership entitled "How Primary Teachers use Music to Support Oral Language Development" within this school district. We understand this qualitative research project will be submitted for formal approval to the UNBC Research Ethics Board.

We support Mr. Wiebe contacting our school teachers to conduct the research. Please note that Mr. Wiebe is an employee of the School District and holds a teaching position at New Hazelton Elementary School and an after-school band teaching position for our Hazelton district schools.

Yours sincerely,

mWells

Nancy Wells
Superintendent of Schools

NW/cg

cc: Coast Mountains Board of Education School District 82
- District Staff
- Principals & Vice Principals

APPENDIX C:

PARTICIPANT AND SCHOOL DISTRICT CONSENT FORMS

How Primary Teachers Use Music to Support Oral Language Development

Information Letter and Informed Consent

Orlando Wiebe, UNBC Masters of Education in Multidisciplinary Leadership
Project Supervisor: Dr. Willow Brown, UNBC School of Education

This letter is an invitation to participate in a study led by me, Orlando Wiebe, to explore the use of music in the primary classroom. My particular interest lies in the way teachers use songs, chants, fingerplays, rhymes, games, and other musical devices to enhance oral language instruction for primary students. I am interested in how teachers experience the success of musical teaching strategies and make decisions about the frequency of their use. I am also interested in recording some of these musical teaching materials as examples.

What are we asking you to do?

If you choose to participate in this study, you will be asked to share your experiences, background, and expertise in a 30 to 40 minute recorded interview with me. You will be asked a series of questions specifically about your practice of using music with primary students. You will also have an opportunity to review the transcription of your interview for accuracy and to make corrections as well as additions or deletions.

Who will have access to your data?

Access to the data with names attached will be limited to me, Orlando Wiebe. Access to the data with all identifying information removed will be limited to me and to Dr. Willow Brown, my university supervisor. I intend to review and transcribe all audio recordings of interviews myself and so there will be no issue of confidentiality related to a hired transcriber.

Participation in this Study is Voluntary

Your participation in this study is voluntary. Of course, you may simply decide to decline this invitation. If you choose to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time even after the interview has taken place. If you withdraw, all of the data you have contributed will be destroyed and will not appear in the final report or in related professional development sessions delivered to pre-service or in-service teachers after the study. You may choose not to answer some questions or retract your answer or ask that some of your answers not be used.

Potential Benefits and Risks

I do not anticipate that there will be any risks that come about as a result of participation in this study. Your participation in this study may benefit other teachers who are interested in music and the teaching of oral language as well as teachers who are, as of yet, unaware of the

potential of this strategy. You may find that you enjoy the professional learning benefits that are the result of a collaborative, reflective inquiry with colleagues.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

Your anonymity will be protected because only I, Orlando Wiebe, and my supervisor, Dr. Willow Brown, will have access to our meeting notes or transcripts. Your name will not be used in any presentations or articles based on the interviews, unless you agree, in writing, to have your contribution acknowledged perhaps as a co-author or co-presenter. You will have the opportunity to review notes or transcripts from the interviews and ask for specific passages to remain confidential.

Information Storage

All information and data from this study including digital sound files, written transcripts, and written analyses will be stored on a password protected computer or in a locked filing cabinet drawer in Orlando Wiebe's home. All data will be deleted or shredded on or before June 1, 2013. The only remaining material after this time will be presentations or papers that relate to the study but do not contain identifying information. No other use of digital voice recordings will be made.

Questions or Concerns About this Study

If you have questions about this study, please contact me, Orlando Wiebe, by email at wiebeo@unbc.ca. You may also contact my supervisor, Dr. Willow Brown, by email at brown@unbc.ca. If you have concerns or complaints about this study, you are encouraged to contact the UNBC Office of Research at reb@unbc.ca or 250 960-5650.

How do you get a copy of the results?

An executive summary of the study will be shared with each participant upon completion of the study. You will also be offered an electronic copy of the completed project.

Informed Consent

I agree to participate in the *Music for Oral Language Development* study, to be conducted by Orlando Wiebe as part of his Master's of Education requirements, as described on this Information Letter. I understand that my participation in a 35 – 40 minute interview will be audio-recorded and notes or transcriptions made from the taped conversations. I understand that I will have a chance to review the transcripts for accuracy and to make additions or deletions. I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time.

☐ Yes I agree to participate in the Music for Oral Language Development study.

And *if* I am to participate in this study:

☐ Yes, I wish to be identified by name in the project report and related publications.

☐ No, I do not wish to be identified by name or by personal details.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

You will receive a copy of this form for your records and the original will be kept by Orlando Wiebe as evidence of your consent to participate.

APPENDIX D

TEACHER RESOURCES ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Music Resources

The works listed in this annotated bibliography are the resources given or lent to me by the participants or used by me in the classroom over many years. This is by no means an exhaustive list of available resources but it does include the ones that were found to be useful by the people who participated in this study. I have not included some of the more recently well-used internet resources such as *Youtube*, *Grooveshark*, or *Pinterest*. Neither have I included children's trade books, although it is worth mentioning that there are a wonderful assortment of books that feature a well-known song printed as a read-aloud or sing-aloud storybook with illustrations. These song-based storybooks are in some cases available in a big book format, which makes them a natural focal point for shared reading in a primary classroom.

Internet

http://etmonline.org/

The website of the Education Through Music, Inc. organization provides links to education opportunities, research, and music education advocacy.

http://www0.cpdl.org/wiki/index.php/Main_Page

This is a site I have used often for free music resources for older children and adults. It accesses a huge database of downloadable sheet music of music in the public domain.

http://www.chordie.com/

This commercial site includes an extensive database of songs with chords and tabs for guitar, ukulele, and other instruments with subsets of music or "songbooks."

http://www.learningstationmusic.com/

Subtitled *Healthy Music for a Child's Heart, Body, and Mind, The Learning Station* offers free resources, catalogues, and links with music and movement in its focus.

http://www.makingmusicfun.net/

This is an excellent resource for anyone looking for free downloads of sheet music and music activities.

http://www.musick8.com/

This is an excellent commercial site that includes a web magazine. This is mostly a catalogue for downloadable resources for sale that are particularly suited for elementary students.

Books

Beall, Pamela, C. & Nipp, Susan H. (1981) *Wee Sing and Play: Musical Games and Rhymes for Children.* Los Angeles: Price Stern Sloan.

74 songs, rhymes, games, clapping songs, and skipping songs. These are especially useful with small children. This is one book of a series of books by these authors that include *Wee Sing Silly Songs* (2002, 1982), *Wee Sing Fun 'n'* Folk, and *Wee Sing Animals, Animals, Animals* (2006).

Bridwell, Norman (1987). *Clifford's Sing Along: Music Arranged for Voice, Piano, and Guitar.* University of Michigan: Scholastic.

This has been found to be a very useful resource with kindergarten students.

Cass-Beggs, B. (1975). *Canadian Folk Songs for the Young.* Vancouver: J.J. Douglas Ltd.

These songs are very familiar and singable and probably more appropriate for intermediate students.

Diamond, C. (1999). *Charlotte Diamond's Musical Treasures Songbook with Activities.* Vancouver: Hug Bug Music.

Diamond, C. (2003). *A World of Music with Charlotte Diamond: 25 Favourite Songs in English, French, and Spanish. A Music/Resource Book with Activities and Sign Language for Teachers and Families.* Vancouver: Hug Bug Music.

The music of Charlotte Diamond has been helpful to many teachers, including me, because of its clearly laid out pages, simply arranged music, easy to follow movement instructions, and teaching suggestions for cross curricular applications. In my experience, these songs have universal appeal for children.

Erlic, L. (2010). *Finger Rhymes for Holidays, Seasons, and Celebrations: 39 Rhymes and Movement Activities Set to Music.* Lorenz Educational Press.

Fallis, L. I. (1982). *Seasons and Themes: Songs, Activities, and Musical Playlets for Children in Kindergarten and Grades, 1, 2, and 3.* Waterloo, ON: Waterloo.

This is an older well-loved resource that includes piano, guitar, and Orff accompaniments, clear instructions, and suggestions for additional resources.

Pachyderm Music (1980). *Sharon, Lois, and Bram. Elephant Jam.* Toronto: McGraw Hill Ryerson.

I am the Future: Early Learning CD and Handbook: Ecological Literacy for Young Children and Their Families. (2012). Vancouver: Artist Response Team Inc.

Created by a team of musicians, designers, scientists, and educators including founder and renowned singer-songwriter Holly Arntzen, this program uses original songs, drawings, and stories to present ideas of ecology and environmentalism to students. Part of their program includes trips to schools in which they perform with the children singing the songs of this program. Their website is http://www.artistresponseteam.com.

Kaplan, C. & Becker, S. (1987). *Stone Soup: A "Rock" Opera: An Opera for Children Ages 4-7*. St. Louis, MO: Milliken.

This piece tells a story with songs, acting, dance, and narration. The book uses simple and clearly illustrated directions and music transcripts and includes a recording for learning and optional accompaniment.

Raffi (1988). *The Raffi Singable Songbook: A Collection of 51 Songs from Raffi's First Three Records for Young Children*. Toronto, ON: Chappell.

Although it is now more than two decades old, this resource has proven itself invaluable and continues to do so. The songs are tried and true with many years of successful use. Many of the pieces have movement games and teaching strategies.

Richards, M. H. (1985). *Let's Do It Again! The Songs of Education Through Music*. Portola Valley, CA: Richards Institute of Music Education and Research.

This is an extensive and very useful resource based on the work of Mary Helen Richards and the ETM organization. It has over 150 songs, dances, and games that can be used for any primary age students. This collection relies heavily on the canon of traditional American folk music.

Schafer, P. & Stack, Y. (1991*). MusiCanada*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada.

The entire *MusiCanada* series contains age appropriate song and game material for grades one to grade six. The books are geared more for music notation instruction and singing and less for movement.

Smith, M. J. (2006). *Limx aahl k'uba tk'ihlxw: Songs for Children.* Hazelton, BC: Self published.

Together with artist Ken Mowatt, Smith has compiled a collection of Gitxsan songs and artwork in a book with an accompanying CD, for use in local schools. The program includes framed artwork, displayed in the schools where the program is used, featuring local landscapes, Gitxsan elders, and lyrics printed in Gitxsanimx and English. The book contains 14 original songs with lyrics in both languages and guitar chords and suggestions for activities and lesson applications.

Traugh, S. (1993) *All About Counting: Learning the Numbers 1-20.* Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard.

This book is part of a series called *Sing and Learn,* which includes titles such as *All About Colors* and *All About the Alphabet.* The book comes with a recording of the songs, words, suggestions for use, and photocopy masters for student activities.

Recordings

Brown, R. (2001). *Multiplication, Intelli-tunes* [CD]. Red Bluff CA: Self-published/produced by Ron Brown.

This is an example of music used as a mnemonic tool to memorize math facts. Each original tune teaches a different set of multiples.

Greg & Steve. (1987). *Kids in Motion* [CD]. Youngheart Records.

These songs are designed to be used for movement activities with young children. They have repetitive lyrics and movement inspiring rhythm.

Learning Station (Musical group), Monopoli, D., Monopoli, L., Hrkach, J., Opalach, P., & USA Kid Singers. (1997). *Tony Chestnut & fun time action songs* [CD]. Melbourne, FL: Learning Station.

This was found to be very useful for the kindergarten teacher for engaging students in musical movement activites.

National Kids'Day: The Smile Trust. (2000). *Smile Songs: A Project to Benefit Canadian Children's Charities* [CD]. Toronto: Canadian Independent Record Production Association.

This is an excellent collection of over 20 songs featuring well-known Canadian artists such as Sharon, Lois, and Bram, Fred Penner, Raffi, and many more. This CD was found to be very well-loved by kindergarten students.

Robert Minden Ensemble (1989). *The Boy Who Wanted to Talk to Whales* [CD]. Vancouver: Otter Bay.

Story teller and musician Robert Minden, together with other musicians, brings a compelling story to life using spoken word, singing, and music played on various home-made instruments.

Silverstein, S. (1984). *Where the Sidewalk Ends: Recited, Sung and Shouted* [CD]. Sony Music Entertainment.

Sharon, Lois, and Bram. (2006) *Smorgasbord.* [CD] Toronto: Casablanca Kids

Stewart, G. (1998).*Children's Folk Dances* [CD]. New York: Kimbo Educational.

This collection includes 21 songs based on traditional folk dances from around the world. The CD includes instructions to teach activities and dances. It is suitable for children from ages four to eight.

Vivaldi, A., Armin, A., Babiak, W., & Studio Arts Orchestra. (1991). *Vivaldi's ring of mystery* [CD]. Toronto, Ont.: Classical Kids.

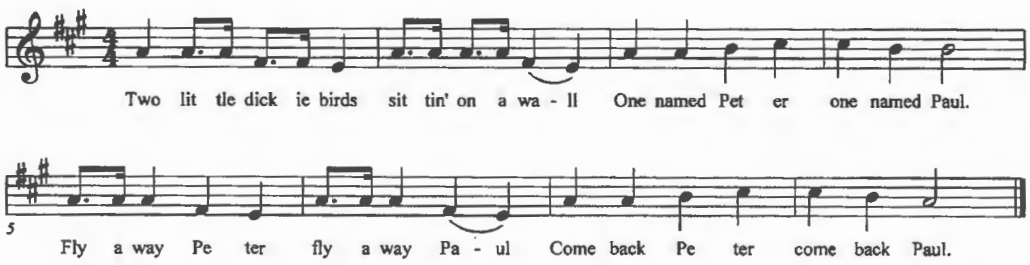
This is one of a series of recordings in the Classical Kids series that features one particular classical composer and tells a story complete with actors, narrator and sound effects. It is an excellent example of how story and music support each other.

APPENDIX E

ORIGINAL SONGS

Two Little Dickie Birds

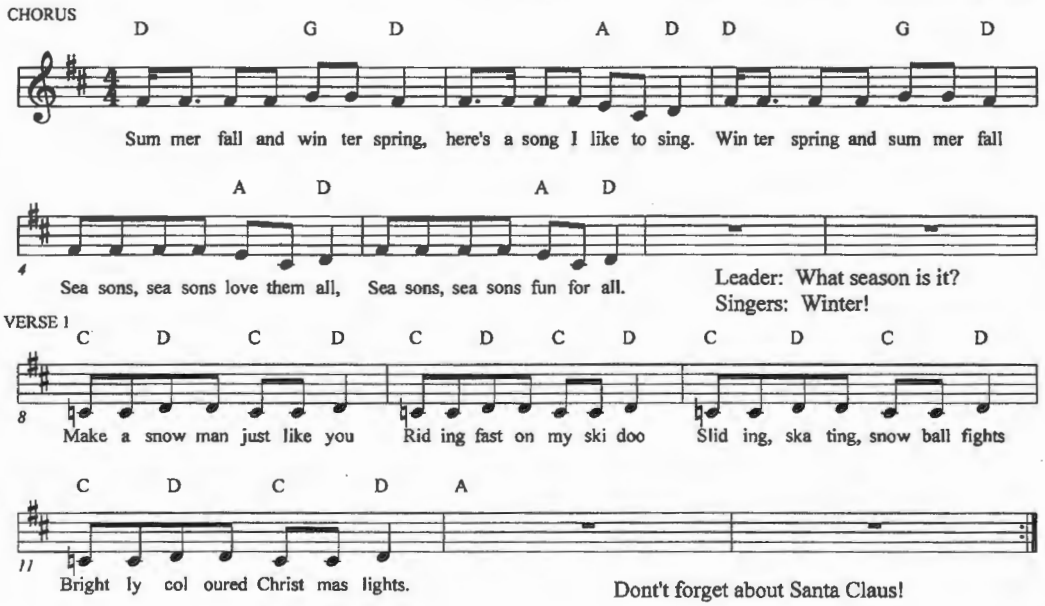
Traditional skipping rhyme
Music by Orlando Wiebe



This must be sung with a little fingerplay magic trick that actually makes the "Dickie Birds" fly away. Create Peter and Paul with two small stickers, one on the nail of each middle finger, curling the other fingers into a fist. When the song gets to "Fly away Peter," flick your right hand behind your ear whilst switching your middle finger with your ring finger so "Peter" disappears into your fist! Make "Paul" fly away in the same fashion and bring them back when the song calls for each of them to return.

The Seasons Song

Words and music by Mrs. H.'s Grade Two Class with Mr. Wiebe



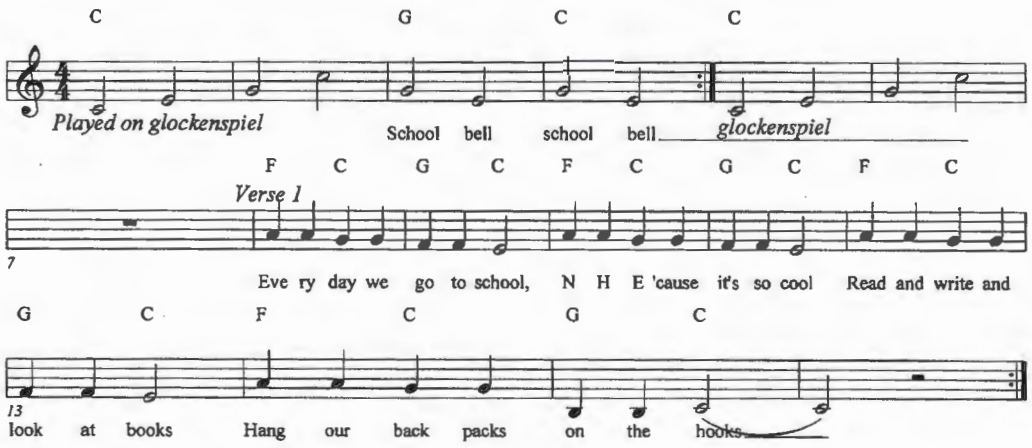
Verse 2
Leader: What season is it?
Singers: Spring!
Taking out my brand new bike
Going for a long, long hike
Running, jumping, having fun
Just relaxing in the sun
Don't forget about the Easter Bunny!

Verse 3
Leader: What season is it?
Singers: Summer!
Filling up my back yard pool
Summer we don't go to school
Hanging at the skateboard park
Staying up 'til after dark
Don't forget about Canada Day!

Verse 4
Leader: What season is it?
Singers: Fall!
Get your brand new school supplies
Reading books will make you wise
Jump into a pile of leaves
Scary night All Hallow's Eve
Don't forget about Poppy Day!

School Bell

Mrs. B's Grade One Class and Mr. Wiebe



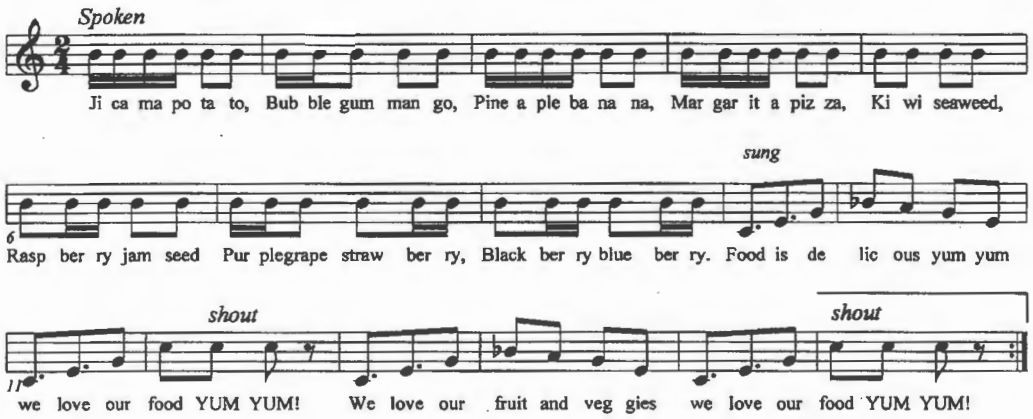
Verse 2
Every day we go outside
On the swing and on the slide
??

Verse 3
Every day we eat our lunch
Mommy packs good food to munch
Cookies, cake and yoghurt tubes
Sandwiches and apples, too

Verse 4
Every day we ride the bus
Its the favourite time for us
Stay at home and play a game
Tomorrow start it all again

Jicama Potato

Mrs. B's Grade One Class with Mr. Wiebe



Note about the origin of this song:
This song was written by a class of grade one students together with their music teacher over the space of four music periods in January 2013. The idea for the song happened quite accidentally when a student brought a piece of a jicama for a taste test. "It's like a potato and it's called a jicama." Naturally, we thought those two words fit together in a fun sounding way so we decided to find other fun sounding food words and put them to music. We chose a Latin sounding rhythm for the chorus befitting our muse, the jicama because it comes from Mexico.

By the way, the jicama was delicious.

Variations:
We've sung this song in a number of different ways. We have sung it together in one group and we divided class into 8 groups of two or three so that each group can chant one of the 8 food lines. Performers could also add a percussion interlude between each repetition. Try saying the chant very softly and then sing the chorus loudly and then switch.